

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 EB-08 FAA-00 DOTE-00 SY-05
/084 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/AFN:JKBISHOP:LLC
APPROVED BY NEA:NAVELIOTES
M/CT:AMBASSADOR ISHAM
-----038931 180645Z /15
P 180151Z JAN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 013412

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS LY

SUBJECT: LIBYA AND TERRORISM/HIJACKING

1. LIBYAN CHARGE GASHUT WAS CALLED IN JANUARY 16 FOR DISCUSSION ON TERRORISM/HIJACKING WITH DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY VELIOTES AND AMBASSADOR ISHAM. VELIOTES EXPLAINED THAT SENATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE HEARINGS DUE TO BEGIN JANUARY 23 ON THIS TOPIC, AND SECRETARY SCHEDULED TESTIFY. DEPARTMENT EXPECTS HEARINGS, WHICH WILL LAST A WEEK AND WILL BE FOLLOWED BY SIMILAR SFRC HEARINGS, WILL FOCUS ON LIBYA'S POLICY CONCERNING TERRORISM AND HIJACKING.

2. VELIOTES EXPLAINED DEPARTMENT AWARE GOL CONSIDERS SOME TERRORISTS FREEDOM FIGHTERS AND THAT GOL DIFFERS WITH USG ON MIDDLE EAST. HOWEVER, USG BELIEVES TERRORISM IS A THREAT TO ALL COUNTRIES. VELIOTES REFERRED TO EARLIER
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DISCUSSION OF EFFECT ON BILATERAL RELATIONS OF LIBYA'S SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM, STATING THAT WHILE USG COULD ACCEPT DIFFERENCES IN POLICIES IT COULD NOT ACCEPT SOME OF MEANS USED BY LIBYA IN PURSUIT OF ITS POLICIES. HE COMMENTED THAT SOME OF THE TERRORIST GROUPS SUPPORTED BY LIBYA

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UNDERTAKE OPERATIONS WHICH DO NOT EVEN HAVE A CONNECTION WITH PALESTINE, AND HE CITED WADI HADDAD'S ROLE IN PLANNING AND EXECUTING THE LUFTHANSA HIJACKING WHICH AIMED TO SUPPORT THE ACTION OF THE SEHLEYER KIDNAPPERS SEEKING RELEASE OF MURDERERS IN GERMAN PRISONS. HE SAID USG ALSO AWARE GOL USES TERRORISM AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POLICY AIMED AGAINST ARAB LEADERS.

3. AMBASSADOR ISHAM DESCRIBED WIDESPREAD U.S. OPPOSITION TO TERRORISM, CITING HARRIS POLL WHICH REPORTED 90 PER CENT OF AMERICANS BELIEVE IT IS SERIOUS INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM AND 60 PER CENT THINK IT IS A SERIOUS DOMESTIC ISSUE. RIBICOFF BILL TO BE SUBJECT OF HEARINGS HAS 25 CO-SPONSORS.

4. IN RESPONDING GASHUT SAID HE WOULD ASK DEPARTMENT IN HEARINGS TO DESCRIBE LIBYAN POLICY ACCURATELY; TO NOTE LIBYAN DISTINCTION BETWEEN TERRORISTS AND JUST LIBERATION MOVEMENTS WHICH LIBYA SUPPORTS, INCLUDING THOSE OF THE PALESTINIANS. HE CLAIMED LIBYA HAD EXPERIENCED TWO HIJACKINGS OF ITS AIRCRAFT AND IS THE ONLY NATION WITH A HIJACKING STATUTE WHICH "COVERS EVERYTHING FROM AN AIR-PLANE TO A HORSE". HE SAID GOL DOES NOT CONDONE ACTS OF VIOLENCE, AND HE DENIED LIBYAN CONNECTION WITH WADI HADDAD. HE SAID THERE WAS NO REAL PROOF OF LIBYAN ENGAGEMENT IN TERRORISM, JUST RUMOR AND CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE. PLANES
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HAD LANDED IN LIBYA ONLY AT THE REQUEST OF THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED. LIBYA HAD REFUSED PERMISSION FOR LUFTHANSA PLANE TO LAND IN LIBYA AND HAD CONDEMNED THIS HIJACKING.

5. CONTINUING, GASHUT SAID HE DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHY BILATERAL RELATIONS SHOULD BE LINKED TO AN INTERNATIONAL ISSUE BEING HANDLED BY THE UN. NEITHER DID HE SEE WHY BILATERAL RELATIONS SHOULD BE TIED TO LIBYA'S RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS.

6. IN RESPONSE TO GASHUT'S REQUEST THAT DEPARTMENT DESCRIBE ACCURATELY GOL'S POSITION ON TERRORISM/HIJACKING, VELIOTES INVITED HIM TO PREPARE AN APPROPRIATE SUMMARY. GASHUT SAID HE WOULD CABLE TRIPOLI TO ASK THAT ONE BE GIVEN TO THE EMBASSY. ON MONTREAL AND HAGUE CONVENTIONS GASHUT SAID HE WOULD SEEK TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER HIS GOVERNMENT, IN LIGHT OF UN CONSENSUS RESOLUTION LAST NOVEMBER, IS NOW CONSIDERING ADHERENCE.
CHRISTOPHER

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